REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 3 and 4 are pending herein. Claims 1 and 2 have been cancelled, without prejudice or disclaimer, in favor of new claims 3 and 4, each of which are further supported by, for example, Fig. 1C and page 5, line 10--page 6, line 9 of the present application.

1. The objections to claims 1 and 2 are noted, but deemed moot in view of the cancellation of those claims.

2. Claims 1 and 2 were rejected under §103(a) over JP 05-264844 in view of JP 08-114722. This rejection is moot in light of the cancellation of claims 1 and 2, but to the extent that it might be applied against new claims 3 and 4, it is respectfully traversed.

With reference to Fig. 1C of the present application, pending independent claims 3 and 4 each recite that a optical fiber array includes bare and jacketed fiber sections for housing bare and jacketed portions of first and second optical fibers on a V-grooved substrate. While the first optical fibers transmit optical signals, the second optical fibers are non-signal transmitting optical fibers (e.g., dummy fibers 3) and are disposed on at least the outermost sides of the fiber array. The non-signal transmitting second optical fibers extend over the entire length of the optical fiber array (as recited in pending claim 3) or are disposed from the optical fiber array to at least the interface of the package that fixes the first and second optical fibers (as recited in pending claim 4).

Applicants discovered that arranging non-signal transmitting optical fibers on the outermost sides of the optical fiber array overcomes problems (e.g., loss of optical signals) associated with lateral and vertical bending stresses applied to the optical fibers that are positioned on the outer sides of the fiber array. The applied prior art of record, discussed below, does not disclose or suggest that non-signal transmitting optical fibers disposed on the outermost sides of the fiber array include both bare and jacketed fiber portions, as claimed.

Fig. 1 of JP '844 shows that an optical fiber array includes bare end portions of optical fibers 30 positioned in V-grooves of substrate 22. Pressure-bearing bar materials 24 are disposed in the V-grooves on the outer sides of the optical fiber array. Even though the Abstract of JP '844 discloses that the pressure-bearing bar materials are "practically similar" to optical fibers 30, it is clear from the drawings in JP '844, especially Fig. 1 of JP '844, that no portion of pressure-bearing bar materials 24 is covered with a cladding layer. As discussed above, pending independent claims 3 and 4 have been amended to clarify that the non-signal transmitting optical fibers that are positioned on the outermost sides of the array include both bare fiber portions and jacketed fiber portions. Again, it is clear that none of the unclad pressure-bearing bar materials 24 disclosed in JP '844 includes a "jacketed fiber portion," as recited in pending independent claims 3 and 4.

In view of all of the foregoing, reconsideration and withdrawal of the §103(a) rejection over JP '844 in view of JP '722 are respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes that contact with Applicants' attorney would be advantageous toward the disposition of this case, the Examiner is herein requested to call Applicants' attorney at the phone number noted below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees associated with this communication or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-1446.

Respectfully submitted,

August 13, 2003
Date

Stephen P. Burr
Reg. No. 32,970

SPB/SC/tlp

BURR & BROWN
P.O. Box 7068
Syracuse, NY 13261-7068

Customer No.: 025191
Telephone: (315) 233-8300
Facsimile: (315) 233-8320